

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

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Deptel 2478, Embtel 2598

Essential point is that while we are trying to get firm political decision in principle now, using language of para D, French formulation seems to defer decision until some indefinite date in the future. British and possibly French appear prefer garrison airlift as "non-provocative" means maintaining Berlin access. It is US view that airlift is not suitable response to stoppage surface traffic. Talk about airlift may have bad psychological effect tending to lead Soviets to take tougher position on ground access.

If Soviets did not interfere with garrison airlift at first, issue would become increasingly clouded. If they later managed to stop airlift West would be at psychological disadvantage. Berlin stockpiles coviate necessity for immediate airlift. Therefore, airlift no solution in principle, and amounts to abandonment of ground access.

US seeks

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US seeks agreement on principle that we are willing use force to defend whatever means of access is threatened; i.e., force would be used on ground if ground access challenged and in air if air access threatened. Until fundamental agreement in principle attained discussion should not be allowed bog down in confusion of detailed planning.

Embassy should also explain foregoing to Boegner. Might also ask Boegner what is meant by point covered last sentence EMBTEL 2607.

DULLES

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